

REMARKS

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-19, 25-30, 42, 43, 45-52 are now present in this application, of which claims 1, 19, and 47 are independent. By this amendment, claims 20-22 and claims 31-41 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 45-52 have been added, and claims 1, 4, 19, and 25-27 have been amended.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Examiner Interview

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the personal interview that was conducted on February 24, 2009. An Examiner Interview Summary was made of record as Paper No. 20090224. During the interview, Applicants' representative argued that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine European Publication 0816550 (Chabanne) in view of Nakamura. Agreement was not reached on this issue. In addition, the Examiner indicated that Chabanne is directed to a top loading horizontal axis washing machine and that for the reference to operate, a portion of the sidewall of the drum must be moved out of the way to load the laundry from the top of the machine.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 16-20, 26-35, and 38-42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chabanne in view of Nakamura; claims 4 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chabanne in view of Nakamura and Chang; claims 8 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chabanne in view of Nakamura, Sloan and Wang; claim 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chabanne in view of Nakamura and Pick; claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chabanne in view of Nakamura and Askenov; claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chabanne in view of Nakamura and Tsutsumi; claims 13-15, 36, and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chabanne in view of Nakamura and Glucksman; and claims 43 and 44 stand

rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chabanne in view of Nakamura and the admitted state of the art (ASA). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejections are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 20-22 and 31-41 have been canceled, thus rendering portions of these rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these portions of the rejections are respectfully requested.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a steam drum washing machine including "a casing having a front and a rear," "a drum rotatably mounted in the tub for rotation about a generally horizontal axis, the drum having a substantially cylindrical sidewall with opposing ends, one of the ends having an opening adapted so that clothes are put in the drum through the opening," "a steam generator for heating the water to generate steam and supplying the generated steam into at least one of the tub and the drum, the steam generator being located between an outer side of the tub and an inner side of the casing," and "a water-supply unit that supplies the water into the tub and the steam generator." The water-supply unit includes "a water-supply valve assembly mounted to the rear of the casing for supplying the water," "a water-supply tube connected between the water-supply valve assembly and the steam generator, the water being supplied to the steam generator separately from the tub," and "a steam tube having one end connected to the steam generator and the other end in communication with the inside of at least one of the tub and the drum for downwardly supplying the steam toward a center portion of at least one of the tub and the drum."

Similarly, while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 19 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a steam drum washing machine including "a casing," "a tub disposed in the casing and adapted so that water is

supplied into the tub,” “a drum rotatably mounted in the tub for rotation about a generally horizontal axis, the drum having a substantially cylindrical sidewall with opposing ends, one of the ends having an opening adapted so that clothes are put in the drum through the opening,” “a steam generator for heating water to generate steam and supplying the steam into at least one of the tub and the drum, the steam generator being located between an outside surface of the tub and an inner surface of the casing,” and “a water-supply unit that supplies the water into the tub and the steam generator.” The water supply-unit includes “a water-supply valve assembly disposed at the casing for supplying the water,” “a water-supply tube connected between the water-supply valve assembly and the steam generator, the water being supplied to the steam generator separately from the tub,” “an auxiliary water-supply tube connected between the water supply valve assembly and a detergent box assembly,” and “a steam tube having one end in communication with the steam generator and the other end in communication with the inside of at least one of the tub and the drum for downwardly supplying the steam toward a center portion of at least one of the tub and the drum.” The water-supply valve is “configured to supply water to the auxiliary water-supply tube independent of the water supplied to the water-supply tube.”

Applicants respectfully submit that these combination of elements as set forth in independent claims 1 and 19 are not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Chabanne, Nakamura, Chang, Sloan, Wang, Pick, Askenov, Tsutsumi, Glucksman, and ASA.

As noted above, the Examiner stated during the interview that Chabanne is directed to a top loading horizontal axis washing machine. As such, Chabanne fails to show or describe a steam drum washing machine that includes a “drum having a substantially cylindrical sidewall with opposing ends, one of the ends having an opening adapted so that clothes are put in the drum through the opening.”

Nakamura is directed to a top loading washing machine with a vertical axis drum washing machine. As such, Nakamura also fails to show a steam drum washing machine that includes a “drum having a substantially cylindrical sidewall with opposing ends, one of the ends having an opening adapted so that clothes are put in the drum through the opening.”

Furthermore, as noted in a previous response, Nakamura applies steam to laundry to pre-treat stains. As such, the laundry being treated by steam in Nakamura is held between the lid and the cabinet while the steam is applied. The use and manner of supplying steam is completely different to that disclosed for Chabanne. Because of these reasons, one of ordinary skill in the art would have not looked to modify Chabanne based on the teachings of Nakamura.

Finally, Chabanne shows vapor that is to be injected through a member supporting the horizontal axis drum while Nakamura discloses that the steam injector is located on the lid of the washing machine and that the steam is directed towards the side of the cabinet to pre-treat laundry held between the lid and the cabinet. As such, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have looked to Nakamura to modify Chabanne to have “a steam tube having one end connected to the steam generator and the other end in communication with the inside of at least one of the tub and the drum for downwardly supplying the steam toward a center portion of at least one of the tub and the drum.”

None of the other references were cited to overcome the above-deficiencies related to Chabanne and Nakamura. Applicants respectfully submit that the combinations of elements as set forth in independent claims 1 and 19 are not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record for the reasons explained above. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

With regard to dependent claims 2, 4, 6-18, 25-30, 42, and 43, Applicants submit that these claims depend, either directly or indirectly, from one of independent claims 1 and 19, which are allowable for the reasons set forth above, and therefore these claims are also allowable based on their dependence from claim 1 or 19. Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Claims 45-52

Claims 45-52 have been added for the Examiner's consideration.

Applicants submit that claim 45 depends from independent claim 1, and is therefore allowable based on its dependence from claim 1, which is believed to be allowable. In addition,

claim 45 recites further limitations which are not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references.

Applicants submit that claim 46 depends from independent claim 19, and is therefore allowable based on its dependence from claim 19, which is believed to be allowable. In addition, claim 46 recites further limitations which are not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references.

Independent claim 47 recites a combination of elements in a steam drum washing machine including "a casing," "a tub disposed in the casing and adapted so that water is supplied into the tub," "a drum rotatably mounted in the tub for rotation about a generally horizontal axis, the drum having a substantially cylindrical sidewall with opposing ends, one of the ends having an opening adapted so that clothes are put in the drum through the opening," "a steam generator for heating the water to generate steam and supplying the generated steam into at least one of the tub and the drum, the steam generator being located above the tub between an outer side of the tub and an inner side of the casing," and "a water-supply unit that supplies the water into the tub and the steam generator." The water-supply unit includes "a water-supply valve assembly disposed at the casing for supplying the water," "a water-supply tube connected between the water-supply valve assembly and the steam generator, the water being supplied to the steam generator separately from the tub," and "a steam tube having one end connected to the steam generator and the other end in communication with the inside of at least one of the tub and the drum for downwardly supplying the steam toward a center portion of at least one of the tub and the drum, the steam tube having a portion extending toward an outer side of the tub from the steam generator, and the steam tube guiding steam into the tub through said other end of the steam tube."

Applicants respectfully submit that this combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 47 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record.

Claims 48-52 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 47, and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from claim 47, which is believed to be allowable. In addition, claims 48-52 recite further limitations which are not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references.

Consideration and allowance of claims 45-52 are respectfully requested.

Additional Cited References

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but have merely been cited to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

Office Action

The Office Action contains numerous characterizations of the invention, the claims, and the related art, with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Chad D. Wells, Registration No. 50,875, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

CDW

By James T. Eller, Jr. #49953
James T. Eller, Jr.
Registration No.: 39,538
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicants